

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03  
INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03  
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGRE-00 /061 W  
-----055610 082239Z /61  
R 071620Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7740  
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ECON, PINT, EG  
SUBJ: FIRST SCAPEGOAT IN PRICE INFLATION IMBROGLIO

1. ALL CAIRO DAILIES CARRIED FRONT PAGE ANNOUNCEMENT  
(AL-GUMHURIYYA CARRIED PHOTO) OF SHIFT OF HEAD OF MIN-  
SUPPLY CONTROL OFFICE CHIEF SAYED AL-MASRI TO MINISTRY  
OF TRADE. SAYED AL-MASRI FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE  
AUGUST 1977 VEGETABLE WAR WHEN HE WAS PLACED IN CHARGE  
OF INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE TO POLICE PRICE GUIDELINES  
AND ASSURE AVAILABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE. HE  
APPARENTLY HAS LOST CONFIDENCE OF HIS SUPERIORS IN HIS  
ABILITY TO PERFORM THIS CONTROL FUNCTION AND SUCH  
IS FIRST TO RECEIVE PUBLIC BLAME FOR CONTINUING SUPPLY  
COMMODITY IMBROGLIO.

2. THERE IS NO ANNOUNCED REPLACEMENT FOR AL-MISRI;  
HOWEVER, THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT HIS FUNCTIONS WILL BE  
TAKEN OVER BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR HIMSELF.  
GENERAL NABAWI IS NOW SEEN PROWLING WHOLESALE VEGETABLE  
MARKETS AT EARLY HOURS HOPING TO STIMULATE NOT ONLY  
SUPPLY OF VEGETABLES, BUT ALSO PUBLIC CONFIDENCE THAT  
GOVERNMENT IS INVOLVED IN HELPING SOLVE MAJOR PROBLEM.

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3. PRIMARY PROBLEM, ACCORDING TO PRESS AND CITIZEN  
ACCOUNTS, NOW SEEMS TO FOCUS ON AVAILABILITY AND PRICE  
OF FRESH VEGETABLES. LESS THAN EIGHT MONTHS AGO VEGETABLES  
(PRIMARILY TOMATOES, ONIONS AND ZUCCHINI SQUASH)  
WERE ALWAYS AVAILABLE AND AT VERY LOW PRICES (RANGING  
FROM TWO TO SIX PIASTERS A KILO DEPENDING ON SEASON).

MANY EGYPTIANS IN THE 25-50 POUND-A-MONTH CATEGORY DEPENDED ON AVAILABILITY OF THESE VEGETABLES FOR BASIC FOOD. NOW IT IS HARD TO FIND ANY OF ABOVE COMMODITIES AT LESS THAN 10 PIASTERS A KILO. HENCE MANY WORKERS ARE NOW FACED WITH POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO USE SIXTY TO NINETY PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME ON FOOD. LACK OF AVAILABILITY SEEMS TO RESULT IN PART FROM LOW CROP YIELDS CAUSED BY UNUSUALLY COOL WINTER WEATHER AND FACT THAT EXPORTS OF MANY VEGETABLES HAVE INCREASED.

4. COMMENT: MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT WITH SITUATION WORSENING, TRADE AND SUPPLY MINISTER TEWFIQ MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE CABINET IN ORDER SHOW GOE'S COMMITMENT TO RESOLVING PROBLEM. OTHERS WONDER IF THE FINGER OF BLAME WILL STOP WITH MINISTER TEWFIQ. EILTS

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3045547  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FIRST SCAPEGOAT IN PRICE INFLATION IMBROGLIO  
**TAGS:** ECON, PINT, EG  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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